# © 01hr\_AC-CC\_ab0837\_pt03

Note: The attached information on AB 837 was included with the 2001 AC-CC hearing records but it does not appear that the committee held a hearing on the bill.

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2001-02

(session year)

#### Assembly

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Corrections and Courts (AC-CC)

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#### INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

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- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)

(**ab** = Assembly Bill)

(ar = Assembly Resolution)

(ajr = Assembly Joint Resolution)

(sb = Senate Bill)

(**sr** = Senate Resolution)

(sir = Senate Joint Resolution)

Miscellaneous ... Misc

<sup>\*</sup> Contents organized for archiving by: Mike Barman (LRB) (May/2012)



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#### Teacher hiring gap widens at MPS

Vacancies up, applications down; hiring intensifies even in suburbs

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**AP The Wire** 

By SAM SCHULHOFER-WOHL and AMY HETZNER

of the Journal Sentinel staff

Last Updated: July 14, 2001

behind last year's rate.

AB 837 der

Milwaukee Public Schools, meet the national teacher shortage.

In a field so competitive that some school districts recruit from Russia or offer \$5,000 signing bonuses, MPS has found only 280 of the 800 certified teachers it wants to hire for the fall.

The vacancies are up 10%, but applications

are down 10% and hiring is running well

Job Hunting?

Certified teachers interested in applying for jobs in Milwaukee Public Schools can call (414) 475-8220 for more information. Recruiting information for the district is on the Web.

#### **Related Story**

Houston: Spends more for teachers

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MPS is launching a first-ever \$38,000 media effort this week to try to plug the gap. Officials are already plotting a more extensive effort for next year. But they are fighting an uphill battle.

Population growth, baby boomer retirements and a push for smaller class sizes have forced school systems around the country to work harder and harder at hiring. Recruiters from Florida and the Southwest visit Wisconsin job fairs to tout higher pay and better weather. In New York, the Board of Education approved a \$6 million ad campaign that makes Milwaukee's look like small potatoes.



**Archived Features:** 







Need Help?

Searching Archives Wireless Access Site Topics Table of Contents Contact Staff Subscriptions Even school districts in nearby suburbs that once had their pick of teachers are receiving fewer applications. And as bad as this year's MPS numbers may seem, district officials said the worst may be yet to come.

#### No certification

Susan Ristow, MPS' manager of certificated staffing, promised there won't be classrooms without teachers in the fall.

There will, however, almost certainly be hundreds of classrooms without certified teachers.

Last school year, of 725 openings, only 420 had been filled by full-time certified teachers as of October. People with emergency licenses, interns in alternative certification programs, and substitutes, some of whom are certified, filled the rest.

MPS, which employs 7,100 teachers, appears headed for an even bigger gap this year. By July 2000, MPS had hired 325 people, or 45% of that year's openings, compared with just 35% of openings filled so far this year.

In an 11th-hour hunt for more teachers, MPS is taking to the airwaves and newspaper pages this week.

The campaign's \$38,000 budget won't go far, though. The TV ads will last just 10 seconds and run only on cable.

A thorough effort, including videos, CD-ROMs and brochures, would cost more like \$100,000, MPS communications coordinator Don Hoffman said.

Next year, MPS may try all that and more. Ristow said administrators are thinking of moving beyond their traditional Midwestern recruiting territory and trying technology such as videoconferencing to connect with more candidates.

"Our usual mode of recruiting has been to attend college fairs, recruit on college campuses, and we're finding that those efforts are not meeting our needs," she said.

MPS' needs, Ristow added, are only going to increase. The system employs 2,340 teachers who are at least 50 years old, which means they will be eligible to retire within five years. If all retire on schedule, MPS could lose 150 more teachers to retirement each year than it has been losing lately, Ristow said.

MPS' difficulty in hiring teachers is nothing new.

While some see work in urban schools as their calling, others prefer suburban settings where children face fewer challenges at home.





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And MPS salaries aren't as high as in some suburbs, although they aren't as low as in other suburbs, either. Starting pay for an MPS teacher with a bachelor's degree and no experience was \$27,948 last year.

Most of Milwaukee's public servants are the highest paid in the state, said Bob Lehmann, president of the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, the local teachers union. But "if you take teachers, we're not even in the top 50," compared with educators elsewhere in Wisconsin, he said.

Still, MPS officials and outsiders agree the district has made strides. The most noteworthy: a new system that lets job applicants interview with specific schools instead of having to take whatever assignment the central office gives them.

"It's a much better context for getting hired," said Marleen Pugach, a professor in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee education school.

For new graduates of education schools, the tight job market is a tale of joy, not woe.

Heidi Salzmann, a 23-year-old from Hurley who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May, went to a job fair and found that her Spanish teaching certification made her a hot ticket.

"I got offers for interviews from a lot of schools that I didn't apply for," she said. "It just got to the point that I didn't need to apply."

Said Tom Kelley, UW's director emeritus of educational placement and career services, "In the 25 years that I've been dealing with the job market, it's the best I've ever seen."

#### Fewer applicants

Ristow said MPS isn't alone in facing a hiring gap.

"If people are not selecting teaching as a profession, if there just isn't a pool of people to draw from, that certainly is going to decrease the number of applicants for any school district, not just Milwaukee," she said.

Even in Waukesha County, where many schools are close to wrapping up their hiring for the next school year, recruiters say there are fewer teaching applicants from whom to choose. In the Waukesha School District, human resources director Paul Roberts compares the 600 applications the district received last year with the 6,000 on file when he came to the district in fall 1997.

In response, many school districts started their candidate searches earlier or hosted and attended more job fairs.

They had company.

A recruitment fair at UW in June attracted 87 school districts, including 65 from outside Wisconsin, Kelley said.

But the recruiters were vying for the attention of just 250 job-seekers, compared with 1,400 at fairs a decade ago, he said.

At another recruitment fair, said Rob Baxter, Elmbrook's assistant superintendent for human resources: "Florida was there. Texas was there. California was there."

Departments of education and school districts in those states, as well as in Massachusetts and Maryland, have launched some of the most intense campaigns to attract teachers. Incentives range from homebuying grants and on-site child care to signing bonuses and higher starting salaries.

"The competition for teachers is very, very intense," MPS' Ristow said. "We're not just competing with the suburbs. We're competing with all school districts in the United States."

#### Key areas lacking

Mark Lichte, superintendent of the one-school Stone Bank School District in the Town of Merton, said he has had no problem hiring teachers.

What many districts are reacting to are some very real shortages in a few critical areas, he said, as well as a contrast to the past when districts were "overwhelmed" by the number of applicants.

"I think it may be hype - I'm not sure," Lichte said of claims of a teacher shortage. "I do know if you go to universities, they're pumping out people. There's no shortage there."

Indeed, Wisconsin's colleges and universities graduate twice as many teachers every year as the state's schools hire.

Between December and June of this year, 5,374 education majors graduated from the University of Wisconsin System and private schools, down from 5,423 the year before, according to Tom Fischer, a University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh professor who conducts a staffing survey for the state Department of Public Instruction.

But only 60% of education graduates end up teaching, largely because they're trained in areas in which the teaching market is saturated with candidates, said David Haselkorn, president of Recruiting New Teachers Inc., a Massachusetts-based organization that oversees a clearinghouse on teacher recruitment and retention.

In addition, education schools still graduate far more elementary teachers than the marketplace needs and fewer teachers of special education, math, science, foreign languages and technical education than are in demand. "Except in a few selected areas, like special education and English as a second language, our supply of teachers is adequate to meet the demand," said Jack Kean, assistant superintendent of the state Department of Public Instruction.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on July 15, 2001.

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#### The Morning Mail

From Journal Sentinel readers

Last Updated: July 20, 2001

#### MPS TEACHERS

#### Residency rule makes things difficult

I was surprised to read July 15 about the teacher shortage in Milwaukee Public Schools ("Teacher hiring gap widens at MPS"). I am a teacher in MPS. I live in the city by choice, but many of my fellow teachers do not. I truly believe the shortage would be alleviated if the residency clause were eliminated.

I know of many excellent teachers who have been forced to resign because they did not live in the city, they married someone who lives outside the city or they are getting married and cannot find housing in their price range in the city.

There are many substitute teachers who are very willing to sign a permanent contract, but doing so would require them to move into the

city. Some have children in high school and established residency in the surrounding areas, so they cannot sign on to teach full time in MPS.

Ask how many teachers would have stayed on but resigned to live outside the city. Ask the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association how many calls the union gets about the residency clause and how many teachers have to resign because of it. Ask how many first-year teachers would stay if they could live anywhere they wanted. Ask how many veteran teachers would have stayed if they had not been

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Gretchen Farrar-Foley Milwaukee

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#### \*\*\*

Hard to hook teachers with unfair requirement

I recently learned that the Pennsylvania General Assembly has made it illegal for the cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to require teachers to live within city boundaries as Milwaukee does. The Milwaukee teachers union should raise this issue again. There is now precedent for a change.

It seems un-American to be told where one has to live in order to hold a job.

It's time for the School Board to rethink this rule, especially in light of the fact that there is a severe shortage of teachers. The quality and quantity of teachers will improve when the rule is abolished. The present rule discriminates against Milwaukee County residents and inhibits promotions within the school system. It negatively affects our children.

Jane Walton
Former MPS teacher
Fox Point



#### Former south side gem in severe decline

We recently walked and drove through Grant Park for three hours and were devastated by the sight of overgrown weeds and brush winding into the beautiful wooded areas and wild vines intertwining with branches of once-healthy trees. Along the road near the golf course, trees are so thick there is no view of Lake Michigan. The Seven Bridges, the jewel of Grant Park, had only a slow flow of swampy water with dead logs and tree trunks rotting where they fell.

Gone are the swans, waterfalls, flower beds and the old bathhouse, replaced by portable toilets, an ugly sight on the beach. The ponds are murky and stagnant, the bike path overgrown with high weeds; there are no benches, wastebaskets or rest facilities.

When a park is properly maintained, people feel welcome. What once was a gem in South Milwaukee is slowly declining, not because of crowds of people, but because of a lack of allocated funds by the





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county government.

There are plans to develop a pricey golf course at Bender Park, a few miles south of Grant Park. If so, should Grant Park be left to disintegrate while money is being allocated for this new project? County Executive F. Thomas Ament should be reminded that Grant Park has been a community treasure for all the people, and he should not let budget politics destroy it.

Eleanore Hinich Milwaukee

\*\*\*

#### ROADKILL

#### Another option for removing animals

This is regarding the July 16 article "Roadkill duty baffles counties."

Roadkill is the result of a collision with a motor vehicle. If a collision involves a telephone pole and a vehicle, the driver or his or her insurance company is held responsible for the costs resulting from that collision.

It seems to me that if there are costs incurred for removing the carcass hit by a vehicle, those costs are the responsibility of the driver and, by extension, the insurance company.

The agency responsible for roadkill removal should give the responsible party the option of removing the carcass themselves or paying removal costs.

James J. Gawne Sr. Wautoma

\*\*\*

#### Officials should let process occur naturally

The article "Roadkill duties baffle counties" is a perfect example of how thin-skinned we have become. There is no good reason that a dead deer carcass can't be left to decay in an unmowed ditch. The process is quicker than people would think and without the stink that most local officials would have us believe.

A good example of the hype comes from Rich Bolte, director of the Waukesha County Department of Public Works. He mentioned in the article that a person can't bury a 400-pound deer. Either he's out of touch, or I'm hunting in the wrong county.

Dean Koch Mequon JS Online: JS Online
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DANGEROUS ANIMALS

\*\*\*

#### We can live with, respect wild creatures

It never ceases to amaze me how ignorant some people in our society can be. Concerning the reintroduction of grizzlies, a little bit of research would show that most bear attacks are defensive, such as a mother protecting her cubs. Bears rarely attack humans for no reason at all.

Also, while some predators, such as coyotes, do occasionally attack family pets, the smart thing for people to do is to supervise their pets at all times, especially in areas that are known to be inhabited by these animals. Although coyotes are shy creatures, they are also very adaptable, and precautions should be taken.

These wild animals were here long before humans, and there is no reason we cannot live in harmony with them rather than try to destroy them because they don't seem to serve our needs. As far as I can see, humans are the most dangerous and destructive animals on Earth.

It's a well-known fact that guns kill more people every day than a grizzly bear possibly could in a couple of years. But let me guess - a gun is not considered as dangerous as a bear.

Karrin Farrenkopf Milwaukee

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on July 21, 2001.

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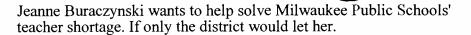
AP The Wire

#### MPS won't relent on residency rule

Requirement questioned amid teacher shortage

By SAM SCHULHOFER-WOHL of the Journal Sentinel staff

Last Updated: Aug. 13, 2001



Buraczynski, a fourth-grade teacher at Burbank Elementary School, is engaged to marry Tim Vorpagel, a West Allis firefighter. But both MPS and the City of West Allis have residency requirements for their employees.

And Buraczynski said that unless MPS waives its rules - something district officials vow they'll never do - she'll have to move to the suburb where her fiance works, adding one more vacancy to the list of open teaching positions.

MPS' residency requirement is a rarity among the nation's big school districts and more restrictive even than the rules for City of Milwaukee employees.

School system officials say the regulation ensures that teachers are committed to the city and its children, keeps property values



280

Number of teachers MPS had hired for this fall as of mid-July.

800

Number of openings.

500

Approximate number of job applicants drawn by a \$38,000 ad campaign.

Source: Milwaukee Public

**Online Poll** 

Is MPS' residency requirement needed?

Yes 0





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steady and costs the district only a few dozen employees a year. But with MPS short hundreds of educators for the fall, some people - even Mayor John O. Norquist, a longtime backer of the residency requirement - are wondering whether it might be time for a change.

"It's frustrating to read and hear things about MPS stating that they're having a hard time finding and retaining good teachers when I'm a good teacher, and I want to work in MPS, and I can't," said Buraczynski, 34.

As of mid-July, MPS had found only 280 of the 800 certified teachers it wants to hire for the fall, and it launched a \$38,000 ad campaign to seek more candidates. District spokesman Don Hoffman said late last week that it was too soon to report how many more

vacancies had been filled. But he said the ads attracted roughly 500 applicants.

MPS officials contend that such recruiting efforts, along with attention to the broad range of reasons for a hiring shortfall, are the best way to hire more teachers.

Dropping the residency requirement could even hurt hiring in the long run, School Board member Kenneth Johnson said. He said the district's already low property tax base - about half of the statewide average on a per-student basis - could fall further if many of MPS' 7,100 teachers moved out of the city. That would make it harder to offer competitive salaries, he said.

"To say that residency is the cause of Milwaukee Public Schools' teacher shortage is shortsighted," said Karen Jackson, the district's human resources director. "There are 100,000 reasons why people leave."

There's a national teacher shortage, she said. Students wrestle with crime and poverty, so it's harder for teachers to simply teach. And midcareer job changes are becoming more common in all fields, not just education.

During the 2000-'01 school year, Jackson said, just 23 of 401 teachers who resigned cited the residency requirement as their main reason. Since 1993, 276 of 3,730 resigning teachers have blamed their departures on the residency rule, she said.

But MPS' survey of teachers who resign includes several other options that could be related to the residency requirement: "personal," "relocated" and "other work." Sam Carmen, executive director of the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, said the local teachers union hears almost every day over the summer from a teacher who is leaving because of the rule.





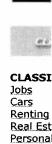
#### Quotable

66 I'm a good teacher, and I want to work in MPS, and I can't. 99

- Jeanne Buraczynski, MPS teacher caught in a residency crunch

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"I think we can't underestimate the impact of the residency requirement on the district's ability to attract and retain" teachers, he said.

After years of asking arbitrators and the Legislature to remove the residency rule from the contract, the union has backed down somewhat.

"It's a high priority," Carmen said. "But are we single-mindedly focused on the elimination of the residency requirement? I would say we are not."

"The problems of MPS are very complex," he said, citing concerns about salary schedules, affordable housing and the quality of the district's facilities.

The residency requirement, which became part of the teachers union contract in the late 1970s, requires all MPS teachers hired after Feb. 8, 1978, to live within the city limits. Similar mandates apply to all other MPS employees except substitute teachers.

Residency rules are common for employees of the City of Milwaukee and other municipalities. But in large school districts, such rules are increasingly rare, especially because the nationwide teacher shortage has made it harder for schools to limit whom they hire.

Chicago teachers still must live in that city. But the Pennsylvania General Assembly in June ended residency requirements for Pittsburgh and Philadelphia teachers, citing a shortage of job applicants. Los Angeles, Detroit and Dallas are among the many other large districts without such rules.

Even Norquist, who has long fought to preserve the residency rule, said MPS' hiring troubles may mean it's time to let teachers live anywhere.

But he said the union should offer MPS Superintendent Spence Korte something in return, such as savings on health insurance.

"If Spence and the board decided that they could negotiate something that was in the interest of taxpayers . . . even though I'm very much for the residency law, I would not attack them if they created something like that," Norquist said.

Norquist said that unlike at MPS, he sees no reason to end the residency requirement for city employees.

"It enriches the city's tax base," he said. "You have the benefit of having public employees living in the city and contributing to the culture and the civic realm of the city. They make good citizens."

Jackson said MPS, too, needs employees who live in the district.

"Quite frankly, another requirement of working in an urban district is commitment," she said. "Maybe residency is a benefit. Maybe it helps us retain people who are committed."

But teachers such as Buraczynski and Jennifer Davis, 38, don't buy the argument.

Davis taught for 12 years at MPS' Goodrich and Emerson elementary schools. She's taking a job in the Franklin School District this fall so she can have the freedom to move her family to the suburbs - somewhere with lower property taxes and a small-town atmosphere, she hopes.

"In Franklin, there's a lady who drives from Janesville" to teach, she said. "That doesn't have any bearing on how people handle their career."

If it weren't for the residency requirement, Davis said, she would not have left MPS.

"I even said in my letter of resignation that I would have been a career MPS teacher," she said. "I really have a lot of respect for the work that MPS does and for my colleagues. I think we're up against a lot of urban issues that make it difficult to teach, but I enjoyed the challenge."

Buraczynski, who's getting married Sept. 22, feels the same.

"It's going to be very hard to leave, a lot of tears," she said.

To be fair, MPS isn't flat out giving Buraczynski the boot. The four-year teaching veteran could stay in Milwaukee if her fiance moved to the city. Then Vorpagel would have to find a new job or, under terms of the West Allis firefighters' contract, take a 2% pay cut.

"That firefighter has the option to work for Milwaukee, too," Jackson said. "It's a matter of choices."

Vorpagel, however, said his choices aren't very good.

He's been a firefighter for 10 years, but if he joined the Milwaukee Fire Department, he'd start as a raw recruit. Vorpagel would even have to go through the training academy again, said Joseph Czarnezki, executive director of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission.

On the other hand, if Vorpagel continued to work for West Allis, he'd lose about \$1,000 in pay, plus what he describes as a more important perk: knowing that the same firefighters he works with would protect his home and family in an emergency.

When City of Milwaukee employees encounter such Catch-22s, they can ask the City Service Commission or Fire and Police Commission for an exception.

City officials said the exceptions are rarely granted. But at MPS, there isn't even a way to seek one.

"The requirement is what it is," district labor relations specialist Milton Ellis said.

Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Aug. 14, 2001.

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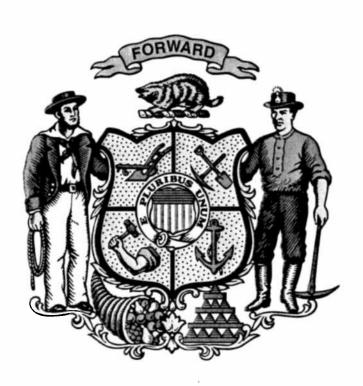


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#### Walker, Scott

To: Subject: Gilbert, Melissa Residency

#### MPS won't relent on residency rule

#### Requirement questioned amid teacher shortage

By SAM SCHULHOFER-WOHL

of the Journal Sentinel staff

Last Updated: Aug. 13, 2001

Jeanne Buraczynski wants to help solve Milwaukee Public Schools' teacher shortage. If only the district would let her.

#### **Residency Rule**

280 Number of teachers MPS had hired for this fall as of mid-July. 800 Number of openings. 500 Approximate number of job applicants drawn by a \$38,000 ad campaign. Source: Milwaukee Public Schools

**Online Poll** 

#### Is MPS' residency requirement needed?

Top of Form 1

Yes

No

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#### Quotable

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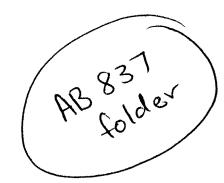
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To be fair, MPS isn't flat out giving Buraczynski the boot. The four-year teaching veteran could stay in Milwaukee if her fiance moved to the city. Then Vorpagel would have to find a new job or, under terms of the West Allis firefighters' contract, take a 2% pay cut.

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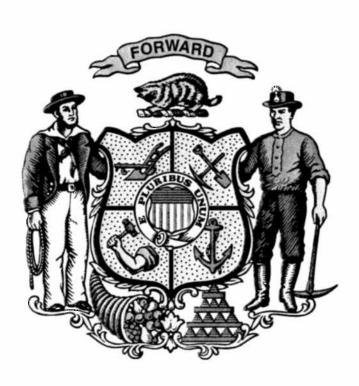
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Appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on Aug. 14, 2001.



Milwaukee Journal Sentinel August 14, 2001

# Residency debate rekindled for MPS

Requirement questioned amid teacher shortage

by SAM SCHRLHOFER-WOHL of the Journal Sentinel staff

Jeanne Buraczynski wants to help solve Milwaukee Public Schools' teacher shortage. If only the district would let her.

Buraczynski, a fourth-grade teacher at Burbank Elementary School, is engaged to marry Tim Vorpagel, a West Allis firefighter. But both MPS and the City of West Allis have residency requirements for their employees.

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Jeanne Buraczynski, MPS teacher caught in a residency crunch, with the fiance, West Allis firefighter Turn Vorpagel cators for the fall, some people—even Mayor John O. Norquist, a longtime backer of the residency requirement—are wondering whether it might be time for a change.

"It's frustrating to read and hear things about MPS stating that they're having a hard time finding and retaining good teachers when I'm a good teacher, and I want to work in MPS, and I can't," said Buraczynski, 34.

As of mid-July, MPS had found only 280 of the 800 certified teachers it wants to hire for the fall, and it launched a \$38,000 ad campaign to seek more candidates. District spokesman Don Hoffman said late last week that it was too soon to report how many more vacancies had been filled. But he said the ads attracted roughly 500 applicants.

MPS officials contend that such recruiting efforts, along with attention to the broad range of reasons for a hiring shortfall, are the best way to hire more teachers.

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There's a national teacher shortage, she said. Students wrestle with crime and poverty, so it's harder for teachers to simply teach. And mid-career job changes are becoming more common in all fields, not just education.

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AB Solder

But MPS' survey of teachers who resign includes several other options that could be related to the residency requirement: "personal," "relocated" and "other work." Sam Carmen, executive director of the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, said the local teachers union hears almost every day over the summer from a teacher who is leaving because of the rule.

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Chicago teachers still must live

La Crosse Tribune August 7, 2001

#### OUR VIEW

# Change the law on telcom taxes

Here's a project for the Legislature: Begin a crusade to help cities reap the benefits of telecommunication property taxes that now go exclusively to the state.

Such a change in state law would help dozens of municipalities with telecommunication businesses located in their communities.

At present, such facilities pay property taxes to the state, not the local communities. But local communities are in need of additional revenue, because the state has frozen shared revenue for several years. Even though local costs have gone up, the amount of money communities receive from the state has not. The upcoming state budget increases state aid by 1 percent. It is the first increase in six years.

Dan Thompson, executive director of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that telecommunication companies have purchased many properties in Wisconsin communities. "There is a lot of property in these communities that has fallen off the tax rolls because it is not owned by telcom companies," Thompson said. "Local governments still have to provide the services for these properties, but they don't get to collect the taxes."

In the last legislative session, there were two proposals dealing with the tax on phone companies. In the Assembly, Republicans Marc Duff of New Berlin and Mike Huebsch of West Salem proposed a bud-

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get amendment to gradually change the tax situation. It failed, as did a rival proposal in the state Senate to add a 2 percent tax on the intrastate revenue of telephone companies. Rather than add new taxes, it makes better sense to allow local government a share in the proceeds of the existing tax.

In La Crosse, CenturyTel paid \$1.2 million in property taxes to the state last year. Next year, it will be more because of the company's new regional headquarters. The city of La Crosse should be entitled to some of that because of the cost of providing services.

This is a worthwhile project for an enterprising legislator or group of legislators.

#### Milwaukee Journal Sentinel August 14, 2001

...cont. from prev. page

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel August 14, 2001

# McCallum urged to OK school fund boost

#### MPS needs ability to raise spending, officials from city say

By ALAN J. BORSUK

of the Journal Sentinel staff

An array of Milwaukee education leaders and politicians on Monday emphatically urged Gov. Scott McCallum to do nothing to help Milwaukee Public Schools—that is, if you define "nothing" as letting stand a state budget provision that would allow school districts to increase their overall spending.

At issue is a provision that would allow districts to exceed the state revenue cap by an average of 0.78 of 1%. Advocates on both sides are lobbying McCallum strongly.

The fraction might sound small, but it could mean almost \$60 million a year in additional school spending statewide, with almost \$11 million of that in Milwaukee, according to a report from the state Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Standing behind a handmade poster that read "Special Education Works!", the Milwaukee political leaders said MPS needed the money to offset increases in spending on special education. And they expressed dismay that the budget included no increases in aid for special education.

"Education in the state has taken too many hits," said state Rep. Christine Sinicki (D-Milwaukee), a former member of the Milwaukee School Board.

The provision came as part of the compromise cobbled together to produce a budget that both houses of the Legislature could approve. School districts and the Wisconsin Association of School Boards are urging McCallum to accept the provision, given the belt-tightening in districts around the state.

Ken Cole, executive director of the school boards group, said the group's message to McCallum was this: "Right now, we're looking for any flexibility that you give us." The amount is less than the group, which has generally supported revenue caps, had sought, Cole said.

Others, particularly Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the foremost state business organization, are urging McCallum to veto the change because of the impact it would have on taxes.

"We see this as just another increase to the property tax," said Joan Hansen, director of tax and corporate policy for the organization. Wisconsin remained one of

the highest-taxed states in the nation, and school spending in the state was among the highest per student in the country, she said.

Hansen said her group agrees that special education is important, but it believes Wisconsin is not getting as much federal aid as it could to pay for such programs.

MPS Superintendent Spence Korte said at the news conference that the revenue cap increase would in effect make up for the impact on MPS of the increasing cost of special education, at a time when state aid for special education is staying flat.

Although some versions of the budget called for increases in aid for special education, the final version did not. The impact, MPS lobbyists said, is that the state-paid portion of such expenses will decline the next two years from about 34% to about 30%. As special-education costs go up and the

revenue cap keeps a lid on total spending, general education programs are being increasingly squeezed, they said.

At the news conference, School Board member Charlene Hardin said it was "a glaring problem" for the state to avoid any increase in special-education aid. She called it "imperative" that McCallum approve the revenue cap change.

State Rep. Shirley Krug (D-Milwaukee) said the budget debate this year hit "an all-time low" in using education as a political football. She criticized cuts in state aid for kindergarten for 4-year-olds in the final budget.

The news conference was held at Starms Discovery Learning Center, 2035 N. 25th St., with about 60 students looking on. The school, which has a year-round calendar, is in session.



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of the Journal Sentinel staff

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Please see RESIDENCY, 12A



DAVID JOLES / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHE

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Residency rule stays despite teacher shortage

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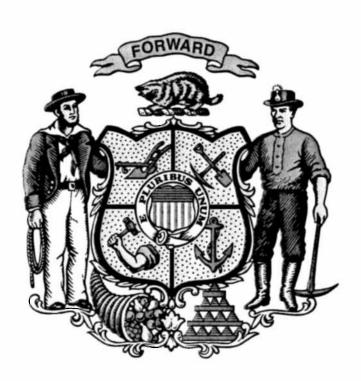
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# MPS down to 120 teaching vacancies

# Korte thinks most openings will be filled by Aug. 27

By SAM SCHULHOFER-WOHL MJS
of the Journal Sentinel staff 9/17/01

The teacher hiring gap at Milwaukee Public Schools has narrowed substantially, to 120 vacancies as of Thursday afternoon.

seems; MPS employs 7,100 teach-The number is smaller than it ers and started the summer with 800 openings.

MPS Superintendent Spence Korte said he was optimistic that most, if not all, of the remaining

vacancies would be filled by the The pace of hiring has been so time classes start Aug. 27.

orientation session Wednesday had signed on only the day berapid that some teachers at an

"We didn't turn off the spigot," Korte said during a meeting Thursday with Journal Sentine editors and reporters. "We're still recruiting. We're still hiring."

from past years' statistics. Last school year, only 420 of 725 openings had been filled by full-time certified teachers by October. Korte described the 120 remaining openings as an improvement

He said most of this year's remaining unfilled positions are

that once found hiring easy had to work harder this year. Popula-tion growth and a push for small-

er class sizes are among the fac-tors creating more jobs than there are people who want to probably in areas such as mathe-matics and special education, where the district consistently has the greatest trouble finding

imposed spending limits have kept the district's salaries below those in many suburban districts. MPS' starting pay for teachers, \$27,948 a year, is "a pretty low number for a four-year-college graduate," Korte said. In Milwaukee, Korte said, state-

Korte said, of the reasons why it's difficult for MPS and other school

The openings are a reminder

teachers.

districts nationwide to put educa-

tors in all their classrooms.

value the teaching profession as much as it used to, he said.

ers in the head," Korte said. "It's Even suburban school districts

not like you get a lot of respect."

"Everyone loves to kick teach

For one thing, society doesn't

less" than they could get else-where, he said. "It's a tough sell." MPS tried a new tactic to make

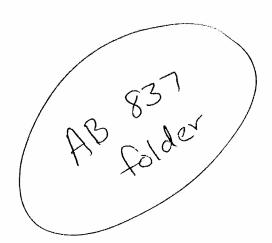
time observing and working in classrooms so they'll understand what the job entails and avoid becoming disillusioned, Korte said. the sale this summer: a \$38,000 re-cruitment advertising campaign. The district is planning a bigger

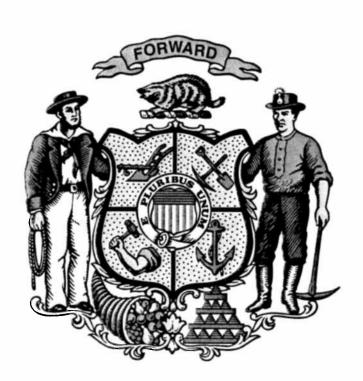
effort, potentially including vid-eos, CD-ROMs and glossy brochures, for next year.

"We're asking people to work in an urban environment for \$3,000

educators leave the profession within their first five years, according to a 1997 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Korte also said school districts need to do a better job of hanging on to teachers. More than 30% of "The real issue is we don't want

to do this every year," Korte said of MPS' hiring blitz. Education schools should have potential teachers spend more





#### RESIDENCY RULE MJS

# Change requirement for teachers 8/17/01

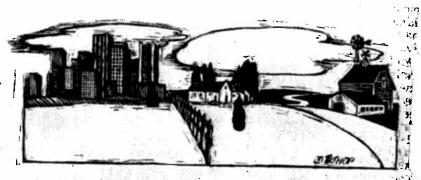
I've long believed the residency requirement for teachers to be absurd. There is a bigger point that no one has raised, though. That is that most municipal borders are obsolete. What's the difference between one side of 60th St. and the other? Where does Milwaukee end and West Allis start? Only the tax collector knows.

Face it, people, most of the suburbs are names only. These names are a throwback to when there was some farmland between names. Things change. It's time to consolidate.

> Steven Bukosky Waukesha

## Employees should support their city

As a City of Milwaukee employee, I strongly support residency requirements.



I don't live in the city because I'm required to — quite the opposite. I work for the city because I live here and am committed to my neighborhood and my city. I've lived in the central city for more than 30 years but have been a city employee a relatively short time.

John Kaye Milwaukee

## District, union could compromise

Milwaukee Public Schools, like all other districts, wants good

teachers. The residency rule was supposed to help achieve this goal. Now, it may be a hindrance.

What if MPS and the teachers union were to open contract negon to tlations? MPS could agree to drop the residency requirement in exchange for union concessions that would make it easy for MPS to discharge poorly performing teachers regardless of tenure.

This would get rid of the residency requirement while assuring that children in Milwaukee get a quality education from good teachers.

Scott Briscoe

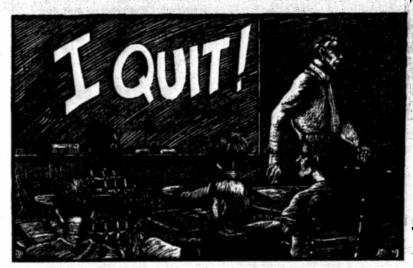
#### MJS 9/3/01 TEACHING

# Residency requirement keeps teachers away

I saw your article about how Harvard is going to help Milwaukee Public Schools retain teachers ("Harvard to help MPS find way to retain teachers for long term," Aug. 29). I laughed so hard I almost choked.

Why doesn't anyone ask the teachers why they left? I'll tell you why I left — residency. Even though my wife works in Madison, we would have gladly found some middle-ground city to live in to have kept my teaching job. I loved my job but was not allowed to keep it.

My mother-in-law lost her permanent teaching job in MPS because she took a couple of years off to raise her children. By the time she came back to MPS, she could not be "grandfathered" out of residency and lost her position, even though her husband was al-



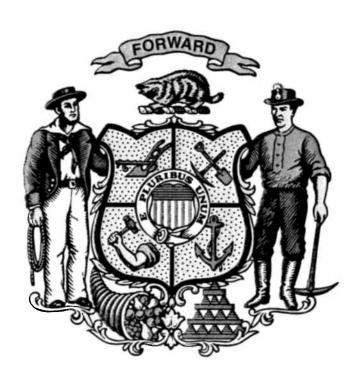
lowed to keep his.

I also have many friends who left after only one or two years because of the overly restrictive nature of the MPS residency policy. These are people who live in the county, just not within the city limits. Some people are out of the district by only a few blocks.

Get rid of this draconian law

and there won't be multiple articles about this in the paper. One last thing. As soon as principals start to get really serious about student conduct, not the lip service that they pass off to the press, you will start to see entire school staffs staying on until retirement.

Jon B. Zeaman Madison AB 837 folder



#### Shepherd Express October 18, 2001

...cont. from prev. page

hearing from our mainstream news media which increasingly see their role as one more of pandering than of reporting fully and fairly.

With the additional restrictions on our freedoms which Congress is about to pass in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, things can only get worse. That's because those in the ascendancy today will not stop until they can promise a no-doubt accepting public, a level of "safety" which is possible only within the confines of a totalitarian police state!

Eroding our domestic freedoms is not enough to satisfy the administration. As I noted last week, the satellite TV channel, Al Jezeera, the Middle East's only free Arabic news medium, refused to cave in to the U.S. pressure to stop carrying statements by Osama bin Laden and his spokesmen. That failure led the administration to call on our TV media not to re-transmit those statements on the grounds that they might

include secret code messages to set off future terrorist attacks.

But this was a patently false rationale since Al Jezeera video can be picked up by satellite or off the Net. The real reason, as Fleischer also proclaimed in his request, was because the administration believes American media should not be airing "enemy propaganda." (Translation: "Only American Propaganda Allowed!")

Sadly, the American TV news operations revealed themselves as far less concerned about maintaining their journalistic freedom than they are with avoiding any offense to an audience they've ceaselessly worked up into a frenzy of mindless, patriotic unity. All promised to be careful—and replays of bin Laden's previous statements all but disappeared from our TV sets.

Dave Berkman is a retired UWM Mass Communication professor and host of "Media Talk," 5 p.m. Fridays on WHAD/90.7FM.

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 21, 2001

# Number of teachers with temporary licenses jumps

By AMY HETZNER

of the Journal Sentinel staff

The number of teachers working under emergency certificates increased by nearly 20% last school year to almost 2,500, the highest level in a decade.

Almost all of the teachers working on the temporary crentials in 2000-'01 — about one every 25 kindergarten rough high school teachers in the state — were teaching special education or high school students.

## Emergency certificates increase by 20%; more elementary instructors affected

The number of elementary teachers on emergency credentials, however, started catching up last school year.

The figures, collected as part of a soon-to-be-released report on supply and demand of teachers in the state, raised concerns among state and local education officials. "Our thing is that every kid deserves a great school, which means that we want a qualified teacher and a qualified staff member there," said Stan Johnson, president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the state's largest teachers union. "This doesn't measure up."

But Gary Vaillancourt disagrees that the emergency credential he needs to teach speech and drama at Racine's Horlic High School makes him les qualified than any other new teacher in his position.

He already has a master's degree in educational administration and has taught media and communications part time at A verno College for the past 1 years.

#### Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 21, 2001

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"There's nothing like actually being in there. There's no doubt nothing can replace" time in a classroom, said Vaillancourt, 50. "But do I feel I am any less qualified than a first-year teacher who is certified, and that's where I would compare myself? I do not."

Statistics on how many teachers are using emergency credentials for this school year will not be available for several months.

But "my expectation is we would be at least equal to last year, perhaps up a little bit," said Peter Burke, director of teacher education, professional development and licensing at the state Department of Public Instruction.

#### Responding to shortage

Local school officials said they weren't happy that a dearth of certified teachers in such areas as special education, math and science had forced them to hire teachers on emergency certificates.

But some contended that many of those using emergency credentials are still qualified even though they may not be fully certified yet.

"We're going to try not to pick just anybody," said Jetha Pinkston Lawson, assistant superintendent of human resources for the Racine Unified School District. "When I hire a non-certified teacher, that means I have exhausted all other means."

Emergency certificates to teach in Wisconsin classrooms come as either permits or licenses. Permits can be issued to anyone who has at least a bachelor's degree. Emergency licenses, which are used more frequently than permits, are issued only to already-certified teachers who want to teach outside of their specialty area.

Teachers on emergency credentials are supposed to enroll in a college program for the field in which they are teaching, and they have to earn six credits in that program to have their certificate renewed each year. But nothing can prevent them from dropping out and still finishing out their year on the credential.

In contrast, to earn a regular teacher license in Wisconsin, education college graduates have to study development for the age of students they are certified to teach, receive student teaching experience at that level and take teaching methods courses in their selected area. In addition, middle and high school teachers need to have at least a minor in the content area they teach.

#### Quality at issue

Extensive studies have shown teacher quality — measured both by certification levels and by whether teachers have majors in their subject area — leads to better student performance, said Linda Darling-Hammond, a Stanford University professor and executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Wisconsin's high standards for teachers have helped its students perform among the top in the nation, she said. An increase in teachers on emergency licenses could affect that.

"The nation looks to Wisconsin, in some ways, for education leadership," Darling-Hammond said.

"it would be a said flaing to see that attention to the quality of teaching to start to wane. And it would be an important thing for Wisconsin to get ahold of the problem before it becomes a major one."

In attempting to explain the increase in emergency credentials, officials point to a number of potential culprits:

Controls on teacher salary increases could be driving education graduates

out of the state and leaving an inadequate supply of teaching candidates. Several alternative credential programs use emergency permits for on-the-job training. Even class-size reduction efforts could be at fault.

#### Elementary schools affected

One of the most notable increases in emergency credentials between the 1999-2000 and 2000-'01 school years was in elementary education certificates.

Traditionally, there have been more than enough elementary teachers to fill classrooms around the state. But the number of emergency elementary credentials issued doubled to 267 in 2000-'01 from 132 the year before.

Jack Kean, the DPI's assistant superintendent for academic ex-

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...cont. from prev. page

cellence, noted the increase occurred the same year as an expansion of the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education class-size reduction program.

"Some of the districts may have been caught short," he said.

In Milwaukee; some of the alternative teacher education programs also rely on emergency certificates to give teaching candidates on-the-job urban school preparation.

Among the 336 teachers using emergency credentials to teach in the Milwaukee Public Schools this year, 158 are enrolled in a program to help them become permanent special education teachers, said Karen Jackson, human resources director for MPS.

"I think this program is preparing me for what I'm ready to do," said Larina Hightower, a special-education teacher at Malcolm X Academy who also is working toward a permanent teaching credential through the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center.

"By the time this program is over, I'll be into my third year of teaching," Hightower said.

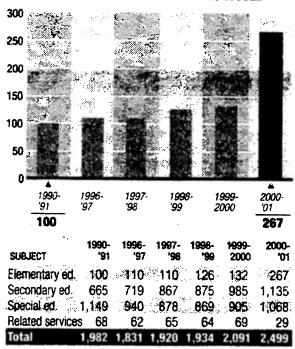
With the help of alternative certification programs, the number of teachers on emergency credentials who are working at MPS has declined in recent years, Jackson said. Last year, there were 460 MPS teachers using emergency certificates, and three years before that, there were more than 600.

"It's a means to an end. And our end is to fill every classroom — and that includes special education — with qualified, competent teachers," Jackson said. "And if we just relied on traditional methods ... we probably would not be able to meet our needs."

### EDUCATION EMERGENCY CERTIFICATES

The number of emergency credentials, issued to teachers so that they can teach outside of their specialty or so people with bachelor's degrees can teach without a license, increased sharply in 2000-'01. The increase was especially acute in elementary education certificates.

#### **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATES ISSUED**



Source: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh 2001 Supply and Demand Project draft report

AMABARA GRAD Bentinel Ismuol Milwaukee Journal Sentinel October 21, 2001

## RILED OVER RANKINGS

By KATHLEEN GALLAGHER

of the Journal Sentinel staff

As the
UW-Madison
Business School's
MBA program falls
out of favor,
educators and
alumni are arguing
over why it
happened and
whether it matters

ay Zemon gave several hundred thousand dollars to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Business School in the early 1990s. He doesn't give a dime directly to the school any longer.

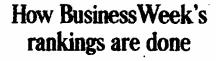
Zemon's wallet snapped shut in the mid-1990s when he became worried about a decline in the school of business and sensed that several promising, young faculty members were headed for the door. He says then-Chancellor David Ward wouldn't meet with him to discuss his concerns.

By the time Ward reconsidered in 1998, those young faculty members were gone and Zemon, who is still a guest lecturer at the school, decided to stop contributing until something changed.

"It breaks my heart what's happening to the business school," says Zemon, who got a master's degree in business administration at UW-Madison in 1973 and runs a private, financial market speculation fund in Chicago.

"But I cannot find a person there who acknowledges the problem, takes responsibility for it and represents to have the authority to

...cont. next page



The Business Week rankings are based on online surveys of both graduates and recruiters. The magazine emailed every graduate at the 82 schools that participated in the survey. The 37-question surveys were sent to 16,843 graduates of the Class of 2000, with a 60% response rate. The magazine also used the responses of graduates from each of the previous two polls — in 1996 and 1998. The student responses, in total, accounted for 45% of a school's ranking score.

In addition, the magazine also mailed surveys to 419 companies that actively recruit MBAs, with a 59% response rate. Those responses made up another 45% of the school's score.

Finally, Business Week measured each schools "intellectual capital." That score accounted for 10% of a school's final score.

To do it, the magazine polled business school deans and academic program directors to determine the scholarly and professional journals that have the biggest impact, then studied each journal going back five years to figure out who the most-important thinkers were over the period and where they taught. The magazine also culled book reviews from the same time period from Business Week, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal to find out whose work was reaching a broad audience.



AB Rolder

# Frustrations drive teachers from MPS

Shortage is becoming a chronic problem for district

Some reasons Milwaukee Public Schools has trouble retaining teachers:

- Lack of support system
- Residency requirement
- District disorganization

MJS 8/12/02

of the Journal Sentinel staff

Christine Capriolo was sick of planning lessons for near-empty classes. Jens Feik-er and his wife wanted to buy a house in the suburbs. Amy Pawlinski tried to stay, but the district lost her paperwork.

So each of these teachers left the Milwaukee Public Schools system, adding to a chronic problem for the district.

Once again, MPS faces a teacher shortage. In May, the district had nearly 1,200 teaching jobs to fill. Today, there are still 334 vacancies, with less than a month to go before school starts.

The district needs to hire 151 teachers before Sept. 5 just to match the number of vacancies in the district last fall. And last

year's figures were 10% higher than vacancies the same time the year before.

"The situation is not getting better said Sue Ristow, manager of MPS's division of staffing services. "It's not like this year is an anomaly. This has been a trend that we've been seeing over the last several years."

In many ways, MPS's problem mirrors those at urban districts across the country, Teachers want higher salaries, better resources and more administrative support than the urban districts offer. Some teachers are also unprepared for the poverty, truancy and other challenges of ur-ban schools, said Tom Carroll, executive

Please see SHORTAGE, 84

### MPS is having trouble holding on to teachers

SHORTAGE, From 1A

director for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

But some of MPS's problems are unique: The district is without a permanent superintendent. The school board has a reputation for being contentious and divided. A third of MPS schools were deemed "in need of improvement" last week by the state Department of Public Instruction.

So as the district hustles to fill vacancies, a deeper problem lingers. Even as MPS adopts new methods of recruiting and hiring, teachers already at MPS leave in large numbers, more than 600 a year for the last four years, compared with depar-tures in the 300s and 400s annually in earlier years.

School officials, teachers and education experts say now is the time to start asking questions beyond why teachers won't ap-

ply to MPS. What catches us all the time is why don't teachers stay? Why (do) so many leave?" said Karen Jackson, director of human resources. "That's a problem we have, and we need to go about finding a problemsolving process.

#### The problems

Capriolo, 27, enjoyed the students in her art classes at South Division High School. But sometimes, less than half of them showed up. When she tried to talk to par-ents about attendance, only a handful came to conferences.

"Education just doesn't seem to be a top priority," Capriolo said.

She thought she'd cope better with a support system, but MPS's mentorship program's limited budget meant only a fraction of new teachers could benefit.

Instead, she started the South Staff Society. She stuffed fliers into every teacher's mailbox. Word spread and teachers joined quickly.

But after a semester of organizing group activities, Capriolo felt overwhelmed by the responsibility. Regretfully, she gave up running the South Staff Society. A few months later, she gave up on South Division all together.

She begins teaching at a high school in Brookfield in the fall.

"It's just easy to get lost in the shuffle," Capriolo said of her MPS job. "It's just so big, there's so many teachers, just so many kids.

Teacher vacancies at MPS less than a month before school starts.

Capriolo's call for support is a common one among teachers. Nearly 11% of teachers nationwide leave the field after the first year. After three years, one-third of the teachers leave education. After five years, more than 40% of the new

teachers are gone, Carroll said.

For the upcoming school year, MPS cut the \$1.8 million mentorship program from the district's budget, a move opposed by the Milwaukee Teachers Education Associ-

**TEACHERS WHO LEFT MPS** 



MARY JO WALJCKI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHE

"We just didn't want to be restricted to stay in Milwaukee for the rest of our lives."

Jens Felker



GARY PORTER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

"I have just really been turned off by MPS."

#### Residency ruled blamed

Another common complaint among MPS teachers and prospective hires is the district's requirement that all employees live in the city of Milwaukee.

Every day at Tippecanoe Elementary School, Feiker, 28, got a present from his first-graders: a crayon picture of him, a heart-shaped drawing, teddy bears.

Yet Feiker knew he wouldn't stay with MPS. He and his wife, Amanda, wanted to buy a house in the suburbs before they had children.

The residency rule, included in the teachers union contract since the late 1970s, is meant to ensure that teachers are committed to the city and its children. It keeps property values steady and costs the district only a few dozen employees a year, school system officials have said.

Feiker, however, said it was his main

reason for leaving.

"We just didn't want to be restricted to stay in Milwaukee for the rest of our lives," he said.

And then there are horror stories of disorganization in the central office.

Amy Pawlinski spent her first year as a teacher at Allen-Field Elementary School but decided the school was larger than she preferred.

She requested a transfer to another MPS school for the next school year, filled out applications and sent résumés to schools with vacancies. But months passed, and Pawlinski never got any calls for interviews, she said.

Concerned, she called the central office for an explanation, and was told not to worry. Weeks later, with still no word, she visited district offices personally and also had her brother, Milwaukee Ald. Jeff Paw-linski, call on her behalf. MPS officials again told Amy Pawlinski not to worry, that she would be placed in a school, she said.

As September drew nearer, Pawlinski still heard nothing from the district. Desperate, she accepted a position at St. Josephat's, a private school on Milwaukee's south side, for \$6,000 less than her MPS

MPS never called to offer her a placement. Two months later, the district sent her a letter asking why she wasn't teaching. Shortly after, she received another phone call from the district, asking what school she had been placed at because they had lost track of her.

Pawlinski said she was livid, and has vowed not to apply to MPS in the future.

"I have just really been turned off by MPS. I really don't want to go through this experience again."

#### Addressing red tape snarts

School officials and community leaders say several efforts are being made to avoid complaints from teachers like Capriolo, Feiker and Pawlinski in the future

The district recently launched the Milwaukee Partnership Academy, an effort that calls on business, labor, political and university leaders to help outline goals aimed at bringing all MPS students up to grade level in reading and math.

It would also put 150 "literacy coaches" in schools to help all teachers, not just new ones, improve at teaching reading

Tom McGinnity, executive director of the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center and a former MPS deputy superintendent, said as city leaders begin learning why some students fare poorly, he believes they'll begin to see a direct correlation to teachers leaving - and want to do something about it.

'In the past, we've said 'It's a large district, there's going to be turnover,' and that kind of thing." McGinnity said. "We need everyone to come to the table to understand that this is a collective problem.... This is not an MPS problem alone.

Officials say residency is just one reason teachers leave MPS. The district has started addressing the other reasons.

MPS has revamped its application pro cess to allow better tracking of prospective hires and for the first time has a full-time recruiter to track teachers and keep in touch with them through job fairs. The recruiter also plans to bring in college students considering teaching at MPS for onsite visits, Ristow said.

Ristow acknowledged that applications, like Pawlinski's, have slipped through the cracks but said such instances are rare.

Finally, Ristow believes having teachers apply directly to the schools where they would work, rather than to a central human resources office, will help keep teachers long term.

Before, teachers were assigned to schools based on seniority and often didn't know specifics of their schools until they began working there. That led to many mismatches of teachers and school cut tures. Today, teachers know exactly what they're getting into, Ristow said.

"I just think that's the best thing that happened in a long time in the district. she said.

Mary Diez, professor of education and graduate dean at Alverno College, said she believes MPS will have trouble attracting and retaining teachers until the district changes its image.

Diez, who has participated in MPS Recruitment Task Force, said she's heard of MPS teachers being scoffed at by friends and families for everything from the \$27,948 starting salary to having to deal with unruly kids.

You need to have a sense of mission to be a teacher, period, but especially to be a teacher in an area where ... people say 'Are you crazy?" " Diez said.

As long as this type of attitude exists, teachers will hesitate to commit to MPS, Diez said.

"I think people in the community of Milwaukee need to get behind MPS and help figure out what it is we need to do," she





## How to keep good teachers

Public schools — especially big-city public schools — somehow must step up the help they give teachers in honing their skills. Schools would thereby both boost their educational quality and hold on to more teachers, who are in short supply.

The lack of a support system is a chief reason teachers cite for leaving the Milwaukee Public Schools, the Journal Sentinel's Vikki Ortiz reported Monday. MPS should set as a top goal putting into place such a system — a goal that entails securing funds to finance it.

The system we have in mind would require rethinking how teachers spend their time. Improving the craft of teaching would be a school's preoccupation. Teachers from the same academic area would regularly sit in on each other's classes, then discuss the sessions. Teachers would hold mock classes among themselves in which they try specific techniques. Novices would get tips from master teachers. What's more, the sessions on teaching would take place by and large during regular hours.

In other words, this support system would require faculty members to spend more time reviewing and practicing the art of teaching and less time actually teaching. In turn, schools would have to hire more teachers. Hence, the added expense. With its present tight budget, MPS probably can't make much headway on implementing such a system. But that's the target, and schools must do what they can to at least come close to it.

MPS shouldn't abandon this worthy goal because it lacks the funds. The state has classified more than a third of Milwaukee schools as failing—a situation MPS is not likely to turn around without better support for teachers. In fact, urban school systems, being held accountable for results by new federal law, must make the case for an increase in federal funds specifically to develop systems to support quality teaching.

Yes, expanding the faculty would aggravate the teacher shortage in the short run. But in the long run, that step should enhance teacher satisfaction and thereby retention.

Teachers did cite two other reasons for quitting MPS: disorganization within the central office and the rule that teachers live in the city.

New superintendents have tended to focus on fixing the schools more than MPS headquarters. But central-office problems have long bedeviled MPS and sometimes trip up the school system, as was the case when the office lost track of an application from a teacher, who consequently took a job at a private school. The next superintendent should strive to improve the workings of the central office.

The residency rule made sense when MPS enjoyed teacher surpluses, as it did for many years. Reserving city jobs for city residents is a survival tool, which counters the flight of wealth to the suburbs. But now MPS is experiencing teacher shortages. So the School Board ought to relax the rule on a temporary basis. For instance, it could waive the rule for new hires for their first five years.

But the most important step MPS can take to retain teachers is to drastically increase the support they get.



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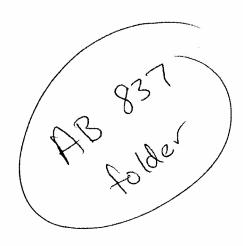
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wife is MPS educator

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Fred Yatchak

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